THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) No Sir, the Supreme Court in its judgement in the case of Indira Sawhney & Others Vs. Union of India has held constitutionally invalid reservation of posts in favour of other economically backward sections of the people who are not covered by any of the existing scheme of reservation.

(b) All possible steps are taken to ensure that the candidates belonging to the minority communities are enable to come forward for public appointments.

Special programmes for the socio-economic and educational upliftment are also being implemented.

Reservation for Physically Handicapped in Central Government Jobs

1940. SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any plan to increase the percentage of reservation for the physically handicapped persons in the Central Government jobs;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) to (c) No, Sir. Section 33 of the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 already provides for reservation of not less than 3% in jobs in government establishments for persons with disabilities.

Reduction in Floor Price of Steel Products

1941. SHRI JIBON ROY: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have reduced the floor price of a number of Steel products including HR Coils to the tune of around 20 per cent despite the known fact that C.I.S. countries are dumping those products in our country; if so, the reasons therefor;

(b) what is the impact of the decision on the domestic producers; and

(c) whether it is also a fact that Government have decided to withdraw floor price once for all by the end of the year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI DILIP RAY): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The floor prices of seven steel items have been revised w.e.f. 1st November, 99 on the basis of trend of international steel prices from non-dumping sources for preceding six months. The domestic steel producers are unlikely to be

adversely affected. The floor prices of prime items of steel shall remain effective for a period of 2 months from 1st November, 99 and shall be treated as withdrawn after the said period of 2 months.

Poor Quality of Tracks and Train Accidents

†1942. SHRI JHUMUK LAL BHENDIA: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Comptroller and Auditor General of India (C & AG) has held Bhilai Steel Plant responsible for poor quality of tracks and various train accidents;

(a) whether it is also a fact that in its latest report on railways, C&AG found Bhilai Steel Plant guilty of not improving the quality inspite of requests made by the Ministry of Railways and also for the loss of around Rs. 85 crores of Government money; and

(c) if so, the efforts being made by the Steel Plant to bring improvement as per the required standard and by when it would be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI DILIP RAY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The report of the Comptroller & Auditor General of India (C&AG) states that the Railways suffered a loss of Rs. 81.32 crore due to supply of defective rails by Bhilai Steel Plant (BSP), SAIL.

(c) Ministry of Railways had suggested certain quality improvement measures to be taken by SAIL, which included: (i) Provision of Vacuum Degassing Plant;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.